

REPRESENTATIVE DRIEHAUS URGES HHS NOT TO WITHDRAW FUNDING FOR CHRIST HOSPITAL

WASHINGTON, DC—Representative Steve Driehaus today urged the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) not to exclude The Christ Hospital in Cincinnati from Medicare and Medicaid programs. In a letter to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Rep. Driehaus emphasized that such a decision could result in the closure of the hospital, severely disrupting health care services for many greater Cincinnati patients.

“The HHS proposal to exclude The Christ Hospital from Medicare and Medicaid is unprecedented. The Christ Hospital is central to greater Cincinnati’s health care delivery system, and this plan would have severe repercussions for the community. I urge Secretary Sebelius to work with hospital administrators to reach an agreeable accommodation,” said Rep. Driehaus.

Text of Rep. Driehaus’s letter follows.

June 23, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 200 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

I write to discourage the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) from excluding The Christ Hospital from federal Medicare and Medicaid programs. Responding to a whistleblower suit which has already settled, HHS’s threat of exclusion is a punishment that goes well beyond what is appropriate. The exclusion of an operating hospital would be unprecedented. Medicare and Medicaid comprise 42 percent of The Christ Hospital’s services, and this exclusion would inevitably force the hospital to close, resulting in a huge impact on the health care delivery system in Cincinnati.

The Christ Hospital is integral to both the physical and economic health of our community, and its closure must be prevented. The Christ Hospital serves a unique urban setting and provides quality care to greater Cincinnati residents. It is an extremely well regarded hospital and has received numerous awards from respected third-party institutions (a list of awards is included for your reference). Its absence would create a void of health care services, thus limiting patients’ choices and access to care. Additionally, the Heart Station provides expert cardiological care, and its panel staffing has been in compliance since 2004, when it ceased the conduct at issue.

In addition to providing quality care to more than 215,000 patients a year, The Christ Hospital employs 4,600 greater Cincinnati residents. The elimination of these jobs in this difficult economic climate would have devastating consequences for local workers and their families.

The Christ Hospital has a long history of outstanding service to the greater Cincinnati community. Its services are critical to the residents of my district. I urge you to continue working with the hospital administrators to find an outcome that ensures patients continue receiving the treatment they need and keeps workers employed.

I appreciate your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Steve Driehaus Member of Congress

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